

Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EA-07 /027 R

DRAFTED BY INR/REA:MBAIRD

APPROVED BY INR/DDR:MPACKMAN

INR/REA - HHOROWITZ

EUR/RPM - DJONES (INFO)

EA/J - DGBROWN

EUR/RPM - JMARESCA (INFO)

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R 030744Z APR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO OIC PTC

INFO USMISSION NATO

ALL NATO CAPITALS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 080400

PASS FOLLOWING VIA THE NATO-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

RR RWFVA RWFVB RWFVD RWFVE RWFVF RFWFG RFWGH RFWI RFWK

RFWL RFWM RFWN RFWO RFWP RFWQ RFWR RFWZ

DE RFWWS #0400 0941445

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R 030744Z APR 76

FROM WASHINGTON

TO AIG 6006, 6007

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NATO CONFIDENTIAL FROM WASHINGTON

POLITICAL ANALYSIS: JAPAN: OPPOSITION PARTIES MODIFY
STANCE ON MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY

1. A GROWING JAPANESE PUBLIC APPRECIATION OF TOKYO'S
DEFENSE RELATIONS WITH THE US CONTINUES TO FORCE THE OPPO-
SITION PARTIES TO MODERATE THEIR CRITICISM OF THE MUTUAL
SECURITY TREATY (MST). IN THE MOST DRAMATIC REVERSAL TO
DATE, THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTY (DSP) EARLIER THIS
MONTH REVISED ITS PLATFORM TO JOIN THE RULING LIBERAL DEMO-
CRATS IN GIVING EXPLICIT SUPPORT TO THE MST.

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2. A CHANGED POLITICAL CLIMATE: OFFICIALS OF THE DSP--THE SMALLEST AND MOST MODERATE OF JAPAN'S FOUR OPPOSITION PARTIES--HAVE LONG FAVORED A BASIC CHANGE IN PARTY POLICY, THEY WERE ENCOURAGED TO MOVE AT THIS TIME BY THE INCREASINGLY POSITIVE VIEW OF THE BILATERAL DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP

THAT THE PUBLIC AND MASS MEDIA HAVE ADOPTED. SEVERAL FACTORS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHANGED POLITICAL CLIMATE ON THE TREATY ISSUE.

(A)--THE REVERSION OF OKINAWA IN 1972 HELPED LOWER THE US MILITARY PROFILE IN JAPAN AND BROUGHT AMERICAN OPERATIONS ON THAT ISLAND UNDER GREATER BILATERAL CONSULTATIVE CONTROL.

(B)--WITH THE END OF US INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA, JAPAN IS NO LONGER DRAWN BY THE MST INTO SERVING AS A SUPPORT BASE FOR A WAR THAT ITS PEOPLE FOUND INCREASINGLY DISTASTEFUL.

(C)--IN RECENT YEARS, CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE GIVEN TACIT ACCEPTANCE TO THE TREATY RELATIONSHIP. THE LEFT CAN NO LONGER ARGUE THAT THE MST HINDERS IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THOSE NATIONS.

(D)--THE FALL OF INDOCHINA HAS FORCED JAPAN TO TAKE A MORE SERIOUS LOOK AT ITS SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, AND MANY PEOPLE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE MST IS THE MOST--OR ONLY--REALISTIC ANSWER TO JAPAN'S DEFENSE NEEDS.

3. THE NEW DSP POSITION: THE AMENDED DSP POSITION DESCRIBES THE MST AS A "VITAL FACTOR IN UPHOLDING THE COMPLICATED POWER BALANCE IN ASIA" AND CALLS FOR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS OPERATIONS. THE PARTY'S PREVIOUS POLICY, ON THE BOOKS SINCE 1964, HAD DEMANDED A PHASED ABROGATION OF THE TREATY AND OPPOSED THE STATIONING OF US TROOPS AND THE MAINTENANCE OF US BASES IN JAPAN. WHILE THE NEW PLATFORM URGES THE RETURN OF UNNEEDED US BASE LANDS, IT GIVES DE FACTO SUPPORT TO THE US TROOP PRESENCE.

4. THE OTHER PARTIES: KOMEITO (THE CLEAN GOVERNMENT
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PARTY) AND THE JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) HAVE ALSO RECOGNIZED THE DECREASE IN POLITICAL BENEFITS TO BE GAINED FROM CONTINUING THEIR TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION TO THE TREATY RELATIONSHIP. IN LATE 1975, KOMEITO RESCINDED A POLICY DEMANDING THE IMMEDIATE ABROGATION OF THE MST. THE PARTY NOW FAVORS ABROGATION ON THE BASIS OF AGREEMENT REACHED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS. THIS POSITION FALLS FAR SHORT OF THE POSITIVE SUPPORT THAT THE DSP IS OFFERING,

BUT--IN EFFECT--IT ACCEPTS THE STATUS QUO.

5. THE JSP HAS MADE NO CHANGE IN ITS OFFICIAL POSITION, AND SHARP IDEOLOGICAL DIVISIONS IN THE PARTY APPEAR TO PRECLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT WILL DO SO IN THE NEAR FUTURE. EARLY THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, THREE OF THE PARTY'S

DIET MEMBERS PROPOSED A PHASED SCENARIO THAT WOULD PROVIDE A BASIS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE STATUS QUO WHILE RETAINING ABROGATION OF THE MST AS AN ULTIMATE THEORETICAL GOAL. THIS WAS THE FIRST EFFORT IN SOME TIME TO MOVE THE PARTY'S THINKING ON SECURITY ISSUES BEYOND THE SIMPLE DEMAND FOR IMMEDIATE TREATY ABROGATION.

6. JAPAN'S COMMUNIST PARTY (JCP) HAS MADE NO CONCESSIONS ON THE TREATY ISSUE, AND AN ANTI-MST POSITION STILL HIGHLIGHTS ITS PLATFORM. THE PARTY'S RIGIDITY IN THIS AREA PROBABLY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASING DIFFICULTIES FOR THE JCP IN EXPANDING ITS MASS APPEAL.

7. SIGNIFICANCE: THE NEW DSP POSITION, WHICH ALLIES THAT PARTY WITH THE RULING LIBERAL DEMOCRATS ON THE TREATY QUESTION; THE MODIFIED KOMEITO POSITION, WHICH PAVES THE WAY FOR AN EVENTUAL COMPATIBILITY OF VIEWS; AND THE MODERATED JSP THINKING ON THE SUBJECT SHOULD EASE THE HERETOFORE IRRECONCILABLE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION PARTIES OVER THE APPROACH TO JAPAN'S BASIC SECURITY. THE CHANGED ATTITUDE IN THE KOMEITO AND THE JSP WILL NOT PRECLUDE PERIODIC FUTURE ATTEMPTS BY THESE PARTIES TO EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT WITH ALLEGATIONS OF IRREGULARITIES IN US MILITARY OPERATIONS IN JAPAN. NONETHELESS, OPPOSITION ATTACKS ON THE BASIC US-JAPAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY MUTED, THUS DEFUSING ONE

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OF THE MOST CONTENTIOUS ISSUES IN POSTWAR JAPANESE POLITICS. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, OPPOSITION PARTIES, COLLECTIVE SECURITY AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE080400
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MBAIRD
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760126-0853
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197604100/aaaadiiep.tel
Line Count: 156
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN INR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <21 SEP 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL ANALYSIS: JAPAN: OPPOSITION PARTIESMODIFY STANCE ON MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY
TAGS: PINT, MARR, JA, US
To: OIC PTC NATO POSTS NATO BRUSSELS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006